United Nations S/2003/919

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2003

Original: English

Letter dated 19 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour, in my capacity as coordinator of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to enclose herewith a copy of a communiqué issued by ECOWAS on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, following a fact-finding mission to that country by an ECOWAS ministerial delegation from 15 to 17 September 2003 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nana **Effah-Apenteng**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 19 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Communiqué

Bissau, 17 September 2003

Following the events of 14 September 2003 in Guinea-Bissau, an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) delegation visited Guinea-Bissau from 15 to 17 September 2003 on a fact-finding mission. The delegation was made up of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal and the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, and was led by the Foreign Minister of Ghana (current Chairman of ECOWAS). They were assisted by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Ambassador of Brazil as representative of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). Discussions were held with President Kumba Yalá, General Verissimo Correia Seabra, Chief of Staff of the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau, and other top military leaders and representatives of political parties and civil society.

The delegation expressed the serious concern of ECOWAS about the deepening political crisis and the attempt by the armed forces to remove President Kumba Yalá from office. The delegation reminded the leadership of the armed forces about the Algiers Declaration of the Organization of African Unity of 1999 and the ECOWAS Protocols on democratic governance, which stipulate that no recognition will be given to any Government that comes to power through unconstitutional means or use of force. It called for restoration of constitutional order, rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as protection of the lives and property of citizens.

After extensive discussions with all stakeholders, the following was agreed:

(1) The armed forces have indicated that they are not interested in political power and will return to barracks;

(2) A broad-based transitional Government of national unity composed solely of civilians will be formed through consultations with all stakeholders;

(3) President Kumba Yalá has willingly agreed to step down in the interest of national unity and the peace and stability of the country;

(4) The transitional Government should be led by a civilian of high repute and integrity;

(5) The transition will be of reasonable duration, at the end of which credible, free and fair legislative and presidential elections will be conducted;

(6) ECOWAS will launch an appeal to the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, CPLP, the Guinea-Bissau diaspora community and all friends of Guinea-Bissau to lend financial, technical and material support to enable the country to embark on a successful democratic transition and socio-economic reconstruction.